

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A washable pad, at least comprising an assembly of a moisture-absorption element which is positioned between a moisture-permeable top-layer material and a moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material, each with a thickness and an area which are such that the materials have substantially the same surface area and, in the position of use, the top surface of the moisture-absorption element bears against the bottom surface of the moisture-permeable top-layer material and the bottom surface of the moisture-absorption element bears against the top surface of the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material, and in which the moisture-permeable top-layer material, the moisture-absorption element and the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material are joined together to form a single unit, wherein the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material is intrinsically moisture-impermeable and bonding is present between the moisture-permeable top-layer material and the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material via perforations, which are present in the moisture-absorption element, in the form of bonding points, wherein the moisture-absorption element and the moisture-permeable top-layer material are at least locally bonded together.

2. (original) A washable pad according to claim 1, wherein the moisture-absorption element and the moisture-permeable top-layer material are bonded together using a spot coating layer of bonding material which is a thermoplastic material or a material which crosslinks under the influence of heat and/or pressure.

3. (currently amended) A washable pad according to claim 1, wherein the moisture-absorption element comprises a combination of moisture-absorbent fibres and a moisture-dispersing layer on one or both sides.

4. (original) A washable pad according to claim 1, wherein there is a border finish present, to which end the moisture-absorption element is smaller than the moisture-permeable top-layer material and the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material, and in that the moisture-permeable top-layer material and the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material are bonded to one another at the periphery of the washable pad.

5. (original) A washable pad according to claim 4, wherein thermoplastic material is applied to the top and/or bottom surface of the moisture-permeable top-layer material, or the top surface of the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material, at the location of the borders and/or

the perforations, in order to promote the bonding between the moisture-permeable top-layer material and the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material.

6. (original) A washable pad according to claim 1, wherein there is a border finish in which the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material is turned over onto the top surface of the moisture-permeable top-layer material and is bonded thereto.

7. (original) A washable pad according to claim 1, wherein the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material, on the top surface which faces towards the moisture-absorption element, is coated, over at least part of this surface, with a layer of bonding material which bonds the moisture-absorption element and the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material together.

8. (currently amended) A washable pad according to claim 7, wherein ~~in the border regions thereof, there is also moisture impermeable bottom-layer material which bears against and bonds to the moisture-permeable top-layer material~~ there is a border finish in which the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material bears against and is bonded to the moisture-permeable top-layer material.

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9. (withdrawn) A method for forming a washable pad in which a moisture-permeable top-layer material is placed at least against a top surface of a moisture-absorption element, and a moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material is placed against a bottom surface thereof, and the moisture-permeable top-layer material, the moisture-absorption element and the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material are joined together to form a single unit, wherein the starting material for the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material is intrinsically moisture-impermeable and a moisture-absorption element is provided with perforations distributed over its surface, which perforations extend through the entire thickness of this element, and in at least some of the perforations the moisture-permeable top-layer material and the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material are brought into contact with one another and bonded to one another by supplying heat and/or exerting pressure, so that bonding points are formed, wherein an assembly is formed from a moisture-absorption element and a moisture-permeable top-layer material which bears against its top surface, and then a moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material is placed against the bottom surface of the moisture-absorption element, and in that this moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material is joined to the assembly, by supplying heat and/or exerting pressure.

10. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 9, wherein a layer of bonding material is provided over at least part of the surface of the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material, on its side facing towards the moisture-absorption element.

11. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 9, wherein the moisture-absorption element is made smaller than the moisture-permeable top-layer material and the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material, and in that also the borders of the moisture-permeable top-layer material and moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material are bonded to one another.

12. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 9, wherein thermoplastic material is applied to the top and/or bottom surface of the moisture-permeable top-layer material, or the top surface of the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material, at the location of the borders and/or the perforations, prior to bonding of the moisture-permeable top-layer material and the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material.

A \ 13. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 9, wherein a border finish is formed, in which the surface area of the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material is made larger than the surface area of the moisture-absorption element and the moisture-permeable top-layer material, and in the border regions the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material is turned over onto the moisture-permeable top-layer material and is joined thereto.

14. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 9, wherein the moisture-absorption element and the moisture-permeable top-layer material are joined to form an assembly with the aid of a method selected from:

- a) stitching;
- b) stepping/quilting;
- c) needling;
- d) joining by means of high-frequency or ultrasonic welding;
- e) joining using a spot coating layer of bonding material which is present on that side of the moisture-permeable top-layer material which faces towards the moisture-absorption element, by supplying heat and/or exerting pressure; and
- f) joining using a spot coating layer of bonding material on that side of the moisture-absorption element which faces towards the moisture-permeable top-layer material by supplying heat and/or exerting pressure.

15. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 14, wherein the formation of the assembly is brought about and the moisture impermeable bottom-layer material is bonded to this assembly at the same time.

16. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 15, wherein the assembly is formed by using a spot coating layer of bonding material which is present on that side of the moisture-permeable top-layer material which faces towards the moisture-absorption element or by using a spot coating layer of bonding material on that side of the moisture-absorption element which faces towards the moisture-permeable top-layer material and by supplying heat and/or applying pressure.

17. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 14, wherein in the border regions of the pad which is to be formed, moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material is also placed against the outer surface of the moisture-permeable top-layer material and is joined thereto by supplying heat and/or applying pressure, so as to form a liquid-tight border finish.

18. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 17, wherein the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material has a larger surface area than the assembly of the moisture-permeable top-layer material and moisture-absorption element and projects at least partly outside this assembly; and in that the projecting parts are folded over to lay against the moisture-permeable top-layer material, to which they are joined.

19. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 17, wherein separate strips of moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material, by being folded over, are made to bear against the top side of the moisture-permeable top-layer material and the bottom side of the moisture-impermeable bottom-layer material, and are joined to the moisture-permeable top-layer material and the bottom-layer material.